

Music in the air: Students serenade isolated memory care residents

Ludwig van Beethoven believed "music can change the world."

Two Georgia College students took that to heart, lifting the spirits of elderly residents one song at a time.

"I believe music has the power to open real connection between humans, and I want to use music as a tool to heal," said graduate student Matthew Seymour, who's getting his master's in music therapy.

"I feel a sense of gratitude to be able to bring some enjoyment to the residents. I always leave with a full heart," he said, "and I'm humbled the residents are enjoying themselves."

Seymour and senior music therapy major Reed Tanner Jr. have been serenading the elderly twice a week at Fellowship Home at Meriwether. The residents have been isolated and in lockdown for almost a year due to COVID.

Music puts smiles on their faces, stirring up long-forgotten memories.

Jared Norrod, director of resident care at Fellowship, said it's "a wonderful opportunity for our residents to interact with someone who is educated on how to connect through music and this often breaks through some of the common barriers seniors face, such as memory impairment and physical limitations."

About a half dozen residents sat in the sunshine this week to listen and remember. Others listened from windows inside the assisted-living facility, while students performed from inside a protective plastic bubble.

It was hot inside the bubble—but you wouldn't have known it by listening. Like a stand-up comedy team, the lively duo joked with their audience, teased and even did a little harmless flirting.

One woman danced a two-step shuffle, as Seymour and Tanner crooned oldies from her past like Frank Sinatra's "LOVE," Elvis' "Hound Dog," "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash and "Hey Good Lookin'" by Hank Williams.

When Tanner sang out "kiss me," a woman whooped happily, waving her arms. She clapped heartily to each song, kicking up her legs.

A gentleman in a wheelchair nearby nodded his head, mouthing the words to each song.

Memories become elusive. But foot-tapping lyrics can resurface them, like: "raindrops keep falling on my head," "ain't no sunshine when she's gone," "just sitting on the dock of the bay," "my bags



A resident of Fellowship Home at Meriwether in Milledgeville enjoys the oldies, performed by Georgia College Music Therapy students.

are packed and I'm ready to go" and "what can make me feel this way? My girl."

"We play songs from their adolescent years, and there's not a feeling like it," Tanner said. "I've seen residents, who can't remember their names, but they can remember the words to songs we're playing from the '40s and '50s."

"It's memory recall," he said. "The music you grew up listening to you don't forget. It's ingrained."

The serenade is part of 180 practicum hours students need with different age groups, before getting internships in music therapy.

There are 55 undergraduate and 14 graduate students taking music therapy at Georgia College, according to assistant professor Dr. Laurie Peebles. They work with children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism, the medically fragile, senior citizens and people with neurological ailments like Parkinson's Disease. Coursework includes guitar studies, piano, percussion, voice lessons and clinical training.

"COVID has caused the music therapy faculty and students to think outside-of-the-box. We have managed to adapt to the circumstances, in order to continue to provide clinical experiences and training for our students," said Dr. Laurie

Peebles, assistant professor of music therapy. In the future, Seymour hopes to work with older adults or teens at a veteran's hospital, alternative school or in prison reform. Once Tanner's board certified, he'll work as a music therapist before getting his master's degree.

To engage more personally with the elderly, the two have gotten their vaccination shots against COVID. Soon, they'll be able to leave the bubble and window serenades behind and interact inside with residents.

"It's been great," Seymour said. "We've truly been honored and blessed to come out here and play music and bring a little light to their lives. Combining music with helping people is what I was meant to do."



Graduate student Matthew Seymour (left) and senior Reed Tanner.

Dr. Helen Matthews Lewis Symposium What is Your Place in the Place?

The Rural Studies Institute (RSI) at Georgia College will celebrate one of the university's most prominent graduates, Dr. Helen Matthews Lewis, this spring. This virtual symposium titled "What is Your Place in the Place?" will be held on March 3, 2021, from noon-3 p.m. The event will gather a community of scholars and activists with various perspectives on her impact on the Appalachian region, rural development and community engagement and empowerment. Please join us by registering using the link below.

If you have questions about the program or would like to register, please contact Veronica Womack veronica.womack@gcsu.edu or Kimberly Moore at kimberly.moore@gcsu.edu.

Guest Artist Recital: Keith Aleo, percussion

Guest percussion artist Keith A. Aleo will give a virtual performance Monday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m.

An instructor at Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Aleo has had a multifaceted career in education, playing in orchestras and as an administrator. He's director of education and orchestral activities at the Avedis Zildjian Co. in Norwell, Massachusetts, as well.

Please follow the Department of Music at [facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment) to view this live-streamed concert.

A \$5 donation is encouraged. Online donations can be made at alumni.gcsu.edu/music.

For more information, email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.



GC Student named Gilman-McCain Scholar by State Department

Georgia College political science student Lauren Miller has been named a Gilman-McCain Scholar by the U.S. Department of State. Miller, a member of the class of 2022, will travel to France this summer to study intercultural leadership and communication at the European Study Center in Strasbourg.

The Gilman-McCain scholarship awards \$5,000 to undergraduate military dependents who embark on international study or research. The award honors the late Congressman Benjamin Gilman, who represented New York in the U.S. House of Representatives for 30 years and served as chairman of the House International Relations Committee, as well as late Arizona Senator John McCain. The scholarship encourages students to pursue rich cultural experiences and develop their capacity for global citizenship.

Miller is a lieutenant in the Georgia Army National Guard and has studied leadership deeply. She has continued to pursue her passion for leadership at Georgia College, where she is a member of the Leadership Certificate Program. Miller ultimately hopes to pursue a career in government service and to remain a reservist in the military.

Miller's passion both for public service and for international travel was formed in her early years. Born in Alaska, she spent her formative years traveling with her family, being stationed at military bases at home and abroad. Miller attended high school in Italy before returning to the United States and beginning her studies at Georgia Military College. She transferred to Georgia College in 2020.

"The study abroad [program] is based on learning to lead in a globalized world and preparing you to be a leader who can effectively communicate, can see problems in an organization, or give you the vital leadership skills you need to lead in a state or country," said Lauren Miller.

Through the Intercultural Leadership Program, Miller aspires to gain valuable insight on leading at the international level and forging relationships across cultures. While in France, she will study human rights, mediation, dispute resolution, social responsibility and peace-building and intercultural negotiation skills. Based at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, she will meet with EU elected officials, ambassadors and diplomats, military officers and international business executives.

"The new Gilman-McCain Scholarship Program is a really exciting opportunity for students like Lauren to be able to pursue international experiences that will help them grow as students and as people, and it's also a great way for this country to honor the dependents of members of our armed forces. Lauren worked really hard on her application, and we are so proud of her," said Anna Whiteside, who coordinates Georgia College's Office of National Scholarships and who advised Miller as she prepared an application.

Miller hopes to become a resource for others by motivating those to study abroad to broaden their horizons. Learn more at www.gcsu.edu/leadership.



What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>23</p> <p>Noon- Georgia College's Rural Studies Institute kicks off the spring semester with a virtual event about rural America and its regions. "Introducing the Black Belt Region: A Hidden Gem" is the institute's first discussion and will concentrate on the rural Southern Black Belt region. For more information, please email veronica.womack@gcsu.edu or kimberly.moore@gcsu.edu.</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>6 p.m.- Julie Bowland: Painting a Vivid Reality; Art Talk Virtual Presentation. For more information, contact Valerie Aranda at valerie.aranda@gcsu.edu or 478-445-2431.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5 p.m.- GC Baseball vs. North Georgia.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1 p.m.- GC Baseball doubleheader vs. North Georgia</p> <p>1:30 p.m.- GC Basketball doubleheader vs. Columbus State.</p>